

Summary Notes

I. Introductions

- a. Attendees present: Lori Goldman, Gary Pauly, Cliff Harbaugh (sitting in for wife Karen), Julie Sawitzke, Deb Blank, Rissah Watkins, John Bee (on phone), Dr. Barbara Brookmyer (on phone).

QUESTION FOR THE GROUP: Is it problematic to have people associated with Ft. Detrick or companies associated with the base?

-Negative responses all around.

QUESTION FOR THE GROUP: Who else should be around the table?

-Dr. Brookmyer suggests academic institutions, but if the Frederick County Health Department or the State wants to enter into a contract to conduct the cancer cluster study based on this committee's work, then that institution cannot be selected for that study because of the perceived potential for an advantage in competition for the contract. All indicated that this question will be better answered after reviewing purpose of the committee.

Review of public nature of this group

-All responded that it's okay for their participation to be public knowledge. Group requests that they have reviewing rights of the minutes or other materials coming from this committee

II. Purpose of the TAC

Purpose: look at the next step in the cancer cluster investigation since the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene presented its preliminary report of the initial Maryland Cancer Registry data analysis. It has been widely acknowledged that there were limitations to the initial analysis related to the geographic area selected, source data, types of cancers examined, and the time period examined. This is an "advisory" committee because another entity cannot be allowed to make decisions about allocating taxpayer dollars. Another purpose for this group, or an expanded group if things progress to this step, is to identify what can be done with available resources (ie. genealogical research). Interest was expressed in digging into the elevated cancer rates in the county as a whole.

III. Mode for decision making

Consensus decision making, if possible.

IV. What is/are the question(s) to be answered?

Review of definitions of a cancer cluster from website

Review of Frederick County cancer data trends – incidence and mortality

Question – What are the environmental exposures we’re concerned about?

Question – What is the link between the R family and the other three families? (Can a family be a cluster?)

Question – is the state going to continue their analysis?

Dr. Brookmyer – Dr. Mitchell will be looking at the age distribution, and how the data looks spatially with the initial data set that was extracted.

Follow-up Q – If that doesn’t show any kind of cluster, is the state planning on doing a retrospective study?

Dr. Brookmyer – I don’t believe so, but discussions about next steps with the Maryland Cancer Registry data are continuing.

Suggestion – A retrospective cohort study is probably what needs to happen if we really want to see the effects of Ft. Detrick.

Dr. Brookmyer – That type of study would cost ~\$2million. We can talk about what’s feasible, and the best approach.

John Bee-The Kristen Rene Foundation may be getting more funding.

Question – Would you want to break this down geographically assuming that what happened was air or water exposure? Is it an entirely different question to ask about employment at Detrick?

Suggestion – separate research focus on residential exposure and occupational exposure (at Ft. Detrick).

Question – why are you talking about certain types of cancer? Are you thinking of limiting the study to certain types of cancer?

Dr. Brookmyer – we already know the rates of all cancers, and not all cancers are known to be related to environmental exposures. The ones initially identified by Dr. Mitchell were related to PCE/TCE exposures.

Discussion of Time Period of Interest:

Known biological testing at Ft. Detrick 1943-69. Cancer may take 20 years to develop.

Suggested years of interest– 1960-1990 for living in the community (occupational exposure may have different years) as there were not as many people.

Suggestion - Start with the exposures and then define time period and geography. If you can’t define exposures first, you have to do a wide sweep. You can do a deed search and determine every family who lived at each address and go from there.

Should we wait for Ft. Detrick to release the list of exposures?

Group says no. The Ft. Detrick review might not be completed for a while (next spring?).

Suggestion - Look at dioxin exposure since we know that Agent Orange was sprayed. Use that as an air exposure and go from there. Also know about TCE exposure through groundwater.

After the appropriate question(s) are identified, then determine the source of data.

Suggestion - All time periods and all cancers is probably too broad and resources don't exist. How about breaking it into more manageable pieces?

Suggestion: Define geography first, then time, then population

V. Next Steps:

For next meeting – Come with information relevant to geographic/geologic area of interest.

Everyone okay with email as the main method of communication for the group – yes

When should we meet again? – Nov. 10, Dec. 1, Dec. 15 7-8:30pm at FCHD same room.